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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3823rd meeting of the Security Council, held on 16 October 1997, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in the Republic of the Congo", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council is deeply concerned about the grave situation in the Republic of the Congo and calls for an immediate end to all hostilities. It deplores the loss of life and the deteriorating humanitarian situation and calls upon all parties to ensure the safety of the civilian population and the safe and unrestricted delivery of humanitarian assistance.

"The Security Council calls upon all States in the region to support a peaceful resolution of the conflict and to avoid any actions which could exacerbate the situation. It condemns all external interference in the Republic of the Congo, including the intervention of foreign forces, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, and calls for the immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces including mercenaries.

"The Security Council reiterates the importance of a political settlement and national reconciliation and calls upon the parties to cooperate with the International Mediation Committee chaired by the President of Gabon and with the Joint United Nations/Organization of African Unity Special Envoy in reaching rapid agreement on peaceful transitional arrangements leading to the holding of democratic and free and fair elections with the participation of all parties.

"The Security Council remains ready to consider how the United Nations can further contribute to a political settlement, including the possibility of a United Nations presence, on the basis of recommendations to be provided by the Secretary-General as soon as possible."

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